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ABSTRACT

This booklet is one of a series of reports addressing the most critical issues confronting state boards of education throughout the United States. Each report attempts to present a concise, informative review and analysis of the best and most current information available on one of these critical topics. This booklet focuses on improving relationships between state boards of education and state legislators. Section 1 contains a brief overview and summary of the booklet; section 2 presents a review and analysis of the political role of state boards of education by Michael W. Kirst; section 3 presents a number of action alternatives recommended by the staff of the National Association of State Boards of Education; and section 4 contains footnotes and a brief annotated bibliography prepared by the author of section 2. (Author/JG)

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THE IMPERATIVE OF LEADERSHIP

III

A REPORT ON STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND LEGISLATORS

EA 008 825

NASBE

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PREFACE

This report on *Strengthening and Improving Relationships Between State Boards of Education and Legislators* represents the third in a series of twelve papers on critical issues impacting state boards of education. Publication of these reports is made available to all NASBE members by funds provided by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-10, Title V, Section 505) provided through the state of New York.

This report is organized into four sections. Section I contains an *Overview Summary* on the research text. Section II is the complete research text — *Strengthening and Improving Relationships Between State Boards of Education and Legislators*. Section III presents *Action Alternatives*. Section IV is the *Appendix* containing footnotes and an annotated bibliography.

This organizational format was chosen to meet the needs of several types of readers. The *Overview Summary* is intended for the reader who is concerned with the subject but for various reasons does not wish to be burdened with detail. Sections II through IV (containing research text, pragmatic alternatives and review sources) are provided for the technical reader who wishes an indepth study of the topic.

NASBE wishes to express appreciation to the Center for Research and Education (CRE) in Denver who coordinated the research efforts and to Dr. Michael W. Kirst, associate professor of education and business administration at Stanford University, who authored the research text on *Strengthening and Improving Relationships Between State Boards of Education and Legislators*.

Robert H. McBride
NASBE President

October 1975
Denver, Colorado

SECTION I — OVERVIEW SUMMARY

Recent studies of state education politics demonstrate that the legislature is becoming more influential and increasingly aggressive in the regulation of non-fiscal as well as fiscal areas of education policy. Consequently, State Boards have a vital stake in setting goals, priorities, and strategic directions for legislation.

Presently, the impact of most State Boards on legislative action and attitudes is minimal. Because of their years of neglecting legislative relationships, and the resulting perception legislators have of Board subservience to the Chief State School Officer, State Boards have a long way to go. Thus, a reorientation of Board behavior is urgent.

The major weaknesses of State Boards in the legislative arena are generally acknowledged to be:

- the traditional apolitical posture of the Board
- its invisibility to the legislature
- dependence on the chief state school officer
- lack of ability to mobilize constitutents of importance to politicians
- lack of expertise.

If Board members accept the need to enhance their legislative leadership, there are a number of ways to substantially remedy those weaknesses.

Traditionally, State Boards have been oriented toward the position that politics should be downplayed in education policy. To attain any substantial influence on legislative decision making, this apolitical stance will have to be modified. Access to legislators is mandatory, and calls for Board members to develop personal contacts and working relationships. State Board members will thus have to weigh the benefits of their "statesman" role and consider the trade-offs implicit in this change of position.

The second most important obstacle is legislators' perception of the Board's dominance by the Chief State School Officer. Much of this perception is caused by the necessity for the Chief to represent the Board in the complex, rapidly changing legislative process. Most Board members are not in the State Capitol continuously, thus the Chief and his staff are usually the best equipped to handle day to day affairs. But this does not preclude the Board from taking initiative in the formulation of policy and intervening directly with the legislature at crucial stages. In order to do this, the Board must make time available in its agenda and personal commitments. Lobbying for educational policy seems imperative in the creating of a separate legislative identify for the Board. This means a more activist role in researching information on educational policy issues and developing a communications channel between legislators and State Board members.

In important ways, the Board and the legislature share the same perspective on educational policy. Both bodies have the capacity to visualize change in established educational procedures, whereas professional educators often tend to become bogged down in traditional conceptions of "how things are done." Therefore, a closer working relationship between the two is not only feasible but appropriate.

The differences in state political structures preclude any "one best system" to bring about legislative effectiveness. Depending on such things as formal powers, party domination of the legislature, individual personalities involved, as well as the political traditions of the state, each Board must choose an appropriate approach. Any or all of the following strategies may be found helpful:

Building the capacity to influence the legislature:

- The Board should have increased staff and policy formulation resources — either by its own staff, from the Chief, or task forces.
- The Board or its staff should set the agenda. Routine items should be deleted to leave time for legislative policy formulation.

- Board members should devote their own time to legislative relations, rather than rely solely on the Chief State School Officer and department of education staff.
- Board members should cultivate personal contacts within the legislature.
- Board members should research specific educational policy alternatives.
- Board members should agree to a division of labor to permit each to specialize in a particular education area.
- Board members should expect to work at least one week per month, and to receive appropriate compensation.

Lobbying through interest group alliances:

- Citizen groups can sponsor forums or private meetings between legislators and Board members.
- Formal education interest groups or associations can often form a coalition around particular bills.
- A working relationship with local school boards can be beneficial as many local board members have access to legislators and many boards have their own lobbyists in the State Capitol.
- Board members who are elected should mount aggressive, issue-oriented campaigns and should consider closer alliances with political parties.
- Board members appointed by the governor should seek close ties with the governor's office.

However, assuming legislative initiative threatens the traditional role relationship with the Chief State School Officer, the State Board, in its efforts to increase its influence on legislative decision making, must strive for the proper balance to avoid needlessly jeopardizing the necessary long-run working relationship with the state education agency.

There is a long road ahead for most State Boards who aspire to substantial legislative influence. But the alternative is a continued erosion of power in an era of state legislation activism.

SECTION II — STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND LEGISLATORS

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The impact of State Boards of Education on legislative action and attitudes is minimal in most states studied to date. From the State Board's viewpoint, this is especially disturbing given the fiscal power of the legislature. Moreover, all recent studies of state education politics demonstrate that the legislature is becoming more influential and increasingly aggressive in expanding its role in the regulation of non-fiscal areas of education policy as well. At least three trends are encouraging this posture:

- The capacity of legislatures to deal with policy that has been enhanced by reapportionment, increased staff, longer sessions, higher compensation, etc.
- Emerging issues such as school finance reform, collective bargaining, and accountability are fundamentally political and require legislative attention.
- The era of growth and preferred status for public education has ended in most states. Legislators are now questioning the priority for education and probing for results from increased state dollars.

Consequently, State Boards have a vital stake in setting goals, priorities, and strategic directions for legislation. Unfortunately, though, because of their years of neglecting legislation relationships and the perception legislators have of Board subservience to the Chief State Board Officer, State Boards have a long way to go. This paper is based on the premise that State Boards should have a substantial and direct influence on legislative decision making; therefore, a reorientation of Board behavior is urgent.

The Current Situation: A Disturbing Portrait

Last year when Campbell and Mazzoni asked the legislative leaders in ten states to evaluate their State Board "in actually formulating and working for education legislation," State Board members flunked the test. Briefly, this is what they reported:[1]

> Only about one-fourth (28 percent) said their State Board was 'important' in determining education legislation; the remainder assessed Board significance as being either 'minor' (50 percent) or 'not important at all' (22 percent). In just one state, Texas, did a majority of these respondents (60 percent) rate the State Board as being an important factor in legislative policy making for education, though in two states, Georgia and New York, the percentages in this category constitute a near majority, 46 percent and 45 percent respectively. At the other extreme, the Nebraska State Board of Education was not viewed by a single legislator respondent in that state as being important in education legislation; four of the six leaders we interviewed dismissed that body as being of no consequence in this process.

LEGISLATIVE LEADER ASSESSMENTS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR STATE BOARD IN "ACTUALLY FORMULATING AND WORKING FOR EDUCATION LEGISLATION" (IN PERCENTAGES)

State Board		*Single Most Important*	*Important*	*Minor*	*Not Important at All*
Elected by People					
Colorado	(N=13)	0	38	46	15
Michigan	(N=14)	0	36	43	21
Nebraska	(N= 6)	0	0	33	67
Texas	(N=10)	0	60	40	0
Appointed by Governor					
Massachusetts	(N= 9)*	0	11	67	22
Minnesota	(N=14)	0	7	71	21
California	(N=14)	0	14	50	36
Georgia	(N=13)	0	46	54	0
Tennessee	(N= 8)	0	13	75	13
Elected by Legislature					
New York	(N=11)	0	45	18	36
All Members	(N=12)	0	28	50	22

N=Number of legislative leaders who responded to the question.
* Includes two members of the legislative staff.

(Since the time of this study, the Nebraska State Board has taken aggressive and positive steps to improve its relationship with the legislature. Legislators often attend State Board meetings and State Board members are called upon to testify before legislative committees.)

> Of the perceived strengths, the resource we have termed prestige — the respect accorded Board members because of presumed personal or positional attributes — was cited many more times by legislative leaders than any other.

The weaknesses most often identified by legislators were the State Boards' not having a tradition of political involvement of any 'clout' (apparently meaning an inability to mobilize constituents of importance to politicians); their lack of visibility to many legislators (a number said that they neither knew what State Boards did nor would they recognize a single Board member); and the dependence of these bodies on the CSSOs (a 'real Charley McCarthy-Edgar Bergen act,' one respondent tartly phrased it).

Earlier studies of State Board legislative influence are congruent with Campebell and Mazzoni's findings.[2]

In the terms used by Russell Meyers in his paper on governance,[3] State Boards are perceived by legislators as playing only a "statesman role" — professional leadership as opposed to a political one. But even this role is having little direct, or indirect, impact on important legislation. The Campbell and Mazzoni report, for example, indicates a striking discrepancy in the perceptions of Board members and legislators concerning communication of State Board positions. Whereas only 2% of Board members interviewed mentioned the lack of a communications channel, almost one third of the legislators could not recall any communication at all. The most frequently mentioned contact was in written form. Especially noteworthy are these findings:

- Only 51% of the legislators mentioned personal informal contacts between Board members and themselves.
- Legislators do not look upon the Chief State School Officer as acting as an agent for the State Board.
- Personal persuasion on the part of the State Board comes from only one or two members, not by the Board as a body.

These perceptions were shared by Education Committee Chairmen in the same proportion as other legislators.

Given this difference in perception between State Boards and legislatures, it is useful to examine the viewpoints of other actors in state education policy.

Campbell and Mazzoni surveyed four major state level education interest groups: NEA and AFT affiliates, state school board associations, and state administrator associations. Spokesmen were asked "whether the State Board ever takes the lead in promoting education legislation." Sixty-nine percent were negative concerning State Board influences, a ratio similar to the legislators' response.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the governor's office has become the crucial access point to the legislature.[4] But the State Board was not found in the inner councils of the governor's office any more than they were in the legislature. Again, the Chief and his staff of Board members in the 10 states thought they had any kind of "direct working relationship with the Governor and his staff"; and in states where the Board claimed a relationship, it was characterized as infrequent and largely formal. *None* of the persons in the governor's office signaled out a Board official as being among the Governor's confidants on education policy.

Legislators also stress the State Board's lack of political clout. The campaigns of Board members who run for election are characterized as "non-events." Little money is spent; there is almost no competition; and hardly any interest is aroused. In Sroufe's study,[5] about half of the elected respondents did not campaign at all and one press release was typical. No wonder legislators do not see the State Board as representing a voting constituency that demands attention.

In sum, as more key state education policy is decided in the legislature, the influence of the State Board of Education will diminish as an actor in the state system. Recent studies of state school finance reform[6] highlight this disturbing pattern as a case in point.

As in all areas of state politics, there are notable exceptions. For example, Texas State Board has high ratings in legislative influence, and Governor Brown of California has been using his Board appointees as education advisors. But the overall picture calls for a drastic change in the role and strategy of State Boards with regard to legislative relationships.

A New Orientation Toward Legislative Relations

The major weaknesses of State Boards in the legislative arena are generally acknowledged to be:

- the traditional apolitical posture of the Board
- invisibility of the Board to the legislature
- dependence of the Board on the Chief State School Officer
- lack of Board ability to mobilize constituents of importance to politicians
- Board member lack of expertise.

The major strengths cited by legislators are prestige and Board member specialization in particular issues.

If Board members accept the need to enhance their legislative leadership, there are a number of ways to substantially remedy each of these weaknesses. Overcoming even some of them could have a dramatic impact on legislators who are receptive to informed views on education that do not represent the needs of an interest group or the established policies of a state department of education.

Several weaknesses cited stem from a Board orientation that politics should be downplayed in education policy (characterized by political scientists as "politics preferred by pedagogues").[7] There are several reasons for the long tenure of this apolitical stance:

- "Politics" per se has been popularly conceived as a sordid business conducted by amoral men bent on furthering their own ends. Thus it has an image unappealing to school board members and seen as detrimental to their position (the fear that the public may tar them with the same brush).
- In a moral sense, then, the interests of public schools really are better served by keeping legislators "out" and high-minded professional educators and board members "in." Education officials serve the best interest of children rather than short-term political needs.
- The higher social status generally accorded to public schools is somewhat dependent upon schools being seen as unique, rather than seen as merely an extension of the same local government that provides dog catchers and sanitation departments.
- The image of "unique function" allows greater leverage by school officials in maintaining a tighter control over the public school system than an image acknowledging that schools are "ripe for picking" by legislators and professional politicians.
- The "unique function" image provides the schools with a stronger competitive position for tax funds among government agencies.

But the "above politics" stance is a two-edged sword. It has inhibited the willingness and appropriateness of State Board personal contact with the legislature, leading to legislators' observations that the Board is "invisible." Board members must change some of their apolitical traditions and deal with legislators directly and in terms that speak to their needs.

For example, many aspiring young legislators look to sponsorship of a specific education program to foster their reputation throughout the state. Board members who have particular policy proposals should consider working with such legislators. Another approach is to plan a definite program of off-the-record discussions with legislators. Most legislators welcome a call from a State Board member for an informal open-ended discussion. Start with key problems, and discuss possible solutions. This approach leads to continued consultation as specific bills are debated, and sets the stage for personal calls when State Board bills are being considered. It is easier to approach a legislator for a vote when he knows your overall policy perspective is generally along the same lines as his own. Moveover, the Board member can in this way learn to anticipate the arguments that will be most persuasive to the individual legislator.

Board members should acknowledge that as the public's spokesmen *they* have the prime responsibility for State Board legislative relations; lobbying for important policies should not be delegated to the Chief or the state department of education. Access to legislators ia a key ingredient of lobbying success. A new Board member quickly learns the formal lines of legislative leadership, but he must continually be aware of the informal influence patterns of who does what. Personal relationships need to be cultivated at both levels.

In some states legislative hearings on bills are largely pro forma; thus a better use of a Board member's time may be a discussion with a legislative leader who can bring along a large bloc of undecided lawmakers. Some legislators have more resources and are more skilled at persuasion than others.

Successful legislation requires a series of successive majorities — several committees and floor votes in two houses. Board members need to know when to intervene and have access to the legislators or their staffs at the critical time. In states like New York with large legislative staffs, Board members need a close relationship with the staff. They can alert the Board to what the key problems are likely to be with a bill and probable timetables for votes. Staffs can also anticipate which committee members are likely to be "on the fence" and receptive to Board communication. Staff members are listed in the legislative directories of most states and usually welcome an informal lunch to meet Board members.

Rules and structure of the Legislative Game

Once Board members have studied legislative policy-making patterns and met some of the actors, they are ready to intervene on specific bills. Most State Boards will want their members to lobby on behalf of legislative positions approved by the entire Board. Moreover, it is very desirable to work in concert with the Chief State School Officer. Legislators may disregard the Chief and the Board if they hear conflicting advice that only confuses them. A State Board who deals regularly with the legislature will soon discover certain rules and structure of the game. These will be helpful if kept in mind during interactions with the legislature.[8]

Everyone in the State Capitol has goals to achieve. The goals of legislators, lobbyists, agency heads, etc. are partially conflicting, partially complementary. The successful lobbyist builds coalitions with groups of legislators who share his goals or who can be persuaded that a bill is not inimical to their goals. Successful negotiation requires a clear idea of what is needed to win, and specific knowledge of the costs and benefits of the proposal for those with whom negotiations are being made. This usually involves compromise. The art of compromising is knowing when to compromise and on what issues. It is advisable to try to avoid making concessions too early. Since there are so many stages in the legislative process, agreements will often not be permanent and must be renegotiated.

The more a Board member knows about the preferences, values, and resources of legislators, the easier it will be to persuade them to support a bill. Legislators seldom know all the possible alternative strategies they could use to obtain their goals. The Board could point out to a legislator, for example, that a different state testing procedure would accomplish his goals of reporting school effectiveness without antagonizing teachers as much as the legislator's own bill.

A cardinal rule is never to ask a legislator to go against his own constituents. This requires some understanding of legislative constituencies. A related rule is never to impugn the motives of another legislator. Learn to lose graciously and not take defeat personally.

The State Board has some resources with which to threaten legislators. But hold power in reserve; never threaten publicly or prematurely. Newspapers are attracted to conflict among state officials, and public denunciation of legislators is a very dangerous tactic. If threats are in order, a credible threat of what you might do under certain circumstances is a better deterrent than a definite statement of what you will do.

The second major area of weakness is the legislators' perception of State Board domination by the Chief State School Officer. Much of this perception is caused by the necessity for the Chief to represent the Board in the complex, rapidly changing legislative process discussed above. Most Board members are not in the State Capitol continuously; and legislative negotiations can take place unexpectedly and at all hours of the day or night. Consequently, the Chief and his staff are usually the best equipped to handle day to day legislative affairs.

But this does not preclude the State Board from taking initiative in the formulation of legislative policy and intervening directly with the legislature at crucial stages. In order to do this, the Board must make time available in its agenda and personal commitments. Campbell and Mazzoni concluded that the policy-making influence of a State Board is most strongly determined by the time emphasis allocated to non-routine matters and the quality of information and analysis provided to them. Consequently, an increased policy-making role will require less attention to routine administrative matters, such as approval of a specific vocational education project, and more time to legislative matters. But the Board can also get bogged down in legislative minutiae. Therefore, an agenda that focuses on major policy is a prerequisite to an enhanced legislative role.

Initiating legislation, in contrast to reacting to it, requires consideration of several specific policy alternatives rather than being restricted to making modifications to a single general approach the CSSO, governor, or legislature has suggested. For example, there are several possible approaches to a statewide assessment system: Some states use normed achievement tests; others use criterion-referenced exercises based on the National assessment; others refuse to use any single test statewide. As time is at a premium for Board members, issue papers analyzing pros and cons of various alternatives may require outside resources. Lacking staff, Boards should consider hiring consultants or convening a volunteer task force to provide it with the needed information. In some states, of course, the department staff may still be the best vehicle to develop an issue paper to highlight these policy alternatives. In any event, it is important for the Board to make a choice on basic policy direction (e.g. statewide vs. local option tests) rather than being presented with a detailed plan based on one alternative.

If the Board decides it cannot get this type of policy formulation assistance from the Chief or task forces, it should hire its own staff. In larger states, at least two full-time education policy analysts selected outside of Civil Service would be needed. Staff members should be trained in economics and political science as well as education. Their skills should include the presentation of broad policy alternatives orally and in writing.

Legislators tend to build their influence by specialization over a number of years in a particular policy area. They command respect from their fellow legislators because of their expertise and grasp of complexity. This implies that Board members must blend the attributes of the lay non-expert, who questions professional dogma, with focus on a particular area of continuing legislative interest. In this way, Board members will be able to converse on the legislators' own terms. A State Board member with a detailed grasp of vocational education, for example, can point out to a legislator the potential and limits of a bill designed to encourage cooperative programs with business. Legislators often do not anticipate implementation issues. Cooperative vocational training with business may be stymied by child labor laws. Many notions of school reform have been tried in the last few years but have been plagued by real-world problems in their application. Implementation also involves subtle resistance by educators who view each new passing categorical program with "this too shall pass — quickly."

In important ways, the State Board and the legislature share the same perspective on educational policy. Both bodies have the capacity to visualize change in established educational procedures, whereas professional educators often tend to become bogged down in traditional conceptions of "how things are done." Therefore, once complexities of a specific area of educational policy are mastered, Board members should be able to be tuned in to the instincts of legislators. And many legislators like to be activists in new

education policies, as is evidenced by the large numbers of Congressionally imposed categorical programs.

Strategies To Bring About A Strengthened Relationship With Legislatures

The vast differences in state political traditions and policy-making patterns preclude any "one best system" to enhance legislative effectiveness. Some states have virtually no legislative staff and are run largely by the Presiding Officer. Consequently, Board contact should focus on the Speaker of the House. In some states the Chief is able and willing to provide adequate policy analysis of alternatives which permits a direct Board role in legislative relations. In others, the Board will need its own staff and cannot always work in complete concert with the Chief on legislative relations. Consequently, national scale generalizations or advice on procedure and style is hazardous. But this writer does feel the State Board should devote its own time to legislative relations and not rely solely on the Chief and Department staff to represent its viewpoint.

In sum, the first stage would be building the *capacity* to influence the legislature:

- The State Board should have increased staff and policy formulation resources — either by its own staff, from the Chief, or task forces.
- Board members or staff should confer with the Chief, but should set its own legislative agenda. Routine items should be deleted in order to leave time for legislative policy formulation.
- Board members should expect to spend at least one week per month on all aspects of Board work (including subcommittees and individual work). Board members should receive appropriate compensation, scaled by income level to give low income Board members the most renumeration.
- Board members need to develop expertise in specific legislative policy areas and learn the rules and structure of the legislative game.

If the State Board is to enhance its political clout in the eyes of the legislature, the next stage would be shedding all vestiges of the apolitical role. Here, the trade-offs and risks become larger. The openly political role might detract from the prestige of the Board and its ability to speak unencumbered by political alliances. To pursue this role, the following are some steps for consideration:

In some states, a more visible political role will be useful. For example, elected Board members should raise enough money to mount aggressive, issue-oriented campaigns. This elected base is part of the reason State Board members are rated as influential by Texas legislators. Like other politicians, legislators are more likely to listen to people who have a public visibility. Board members should consider closer alliances with political parties during their campaigns. This could include formal party endorsements, work on platforms, and joint appearances with party nominees during the campaign. Party activists can be useful middlemen to provide State Board/legislature linkages.

Interest groups have cultivated a long-standing entree to legislators. Citizen groups such as the League of Women Voters and Common Cause can sponsor forums or private meetings between legislators and Board members.

In some states, various education interest groups can form a coalition around particular bills. The Texas Education Association, for instance, has hammered out a common legislative agenda among such diverse factions as teachers, administrators, school boards, and both large and small districts. If Board members are not involved in the interest group coalition proposals, they may miss the key step in setting the legislative agenda. The legislature uses the coalition proposal as its starting point for amendments. A State Board does not want to appear as a captive of the interest group structure, but it certainly should have its viewpoint expressed.

In many states there is no political alliance between local school boards

and state boards. Yet local board members are particularly effective with legislators because they are not viewed as representing a direct employment or salary interest in more state school aid. Local school boards are often important members of the interest group coalitions in states where coalitions exist. Many local school boards also have lobbyists in the State Capitol who can represent the combined viewpoint of all board members.

In short, interest group alliances have been at the center of legislative influence, and there is no reason the State Board cannot effectively push the coalition to endorse its viewpoint.

A related approach would be for Board members appointed by the governor to seek close ties with the governor's office and, ideally, the governor himself. One way of cultivating gubernatorial favor is to work in the campaign, endorse candidates, contribute money, etc. The risk is that the Board will be viewed as an extension and captive of the governor's office, thereby losing its independent viewpoint. California's Governor Brown has used his State Board members as his education advisors. He has let this be known to the legislature, and the Board members have agreed with the Governor to disagree with him publicly; but it is a difficult balancing act to preserve influence in both directions.

Board members should at least have periodic meetings with the governor's staff and the finance department to argue for the Board's perspective on pending legislation. If this is left to the state department of education, the Board's views may be filtered through the Department's perspective. In any case, personal meetings preserve the ability of the Board to intercede with the governor's office as "known quantities" when something crucial to the Board comes up or when the governor is undecided on a veto and needs a wide variety of viewpoints.

The capacity building steps outlined above are clearly part of creating State Board legislative identity separate from the Chief State School Officer. Another part is the ability or power of the State Board to select and to remove the Chief, and to indicate a zone of policy consent for legislation advocacy within which he must operate. Building the capacity to assume legislative initiative, however, threatens the traditional role relationship with the Chief (especially in states where the Chief is elected). Thus the State Board, in its efforts to increase its influence on legislative decision making, must strive for the proper balance to avoid needlessly jeopardizing the necessary long-run working relationship with the state education agency.

There is a long road ahead for most State Boards who aspire to substantial legislative influence. But the alternative is a continued erosion of power in an era of state legislative activism.

SECTION III — ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Staff Recommendations

In each of the two previous *Imperative of Leadership* publications, i.e., governance and finance, your NASBE staff has encouraged each State Board to become more activist in carrying out its policy making responsibilities. In this publication we make the same exhortation. Legislatures are increasingly active in educational policy making. A number of state legislative leaders view the legislature as "the real state board of education" and suggest that the state board role is one of policy implementation. State Boards who play a passive legislative influencing role or who leave it to the SEA staff to maintain legislative contacts run the very real risk of being bypassed and ignored. Ultimately the State Board could become a useless body.

That this is a blunt, unequivocal statement is recognized. It is intended to be a clear and unambiguous warning — get involved or forget about being a powerful force in the educational policy-making process. We do not advocate legislative activism independent of the chief or SEA; we do advocate joint legislative activism based upon a systematic strategy jointly developed *but with the State Board playing a visibly active and aggressive role.*

Influencing the legislative process requires (1) a clear understanding of the process itself, (2) an understanding of influencing access points, (3) an

understanding of relationships of power, personal friendship, constituency influence, caucus influence, bill language compromise, and bill trading, and (4) a clear strategy from bill conception to law implementation of the steps to be followed. Every Chief has someone on staff who has been assigned to work with the legislature. They can assist the Board in gaining such an understanding. But the Board should not rely solely on the SEA staff; they should call upon long time lobbyists and former legislators to assist them in learning how to gain more legislative influence.

We do not believe that Boards will want to be involved in all educational legislation. However, legislation of major importance to the Board and SEA, the education budget and educational legislation introduced by others which would narrow board authority or which would have a major impact on the educational community are all areas in which the Board should actively participate.

From the beginning it will be important for the Board, the Chief, and the Chief's legislative liaison to reach agreement on the role each is to play. In the legislative process nothing is more devastating than members of the same team working at cross purposes. While some Chiefs and some legislative liaisons may be nervous about any kind of Board involvement in the legislative arena, the Board must insist on involvement. At the same time, however, the Board must insist on a team strategy wherein each team member understands their role and at which intervention points team member input will take place.

Suggestions for strengthening Legislator and Governor relationships:

(1) Hold regular monthly or bi-monthly meetings with key legislative leaders and the governor to talk about collective educational concerns.

(2) Schedule meetings with the Senate and House Education Committees to
   (a) review their legislative priorities
   (b) review your legislative priorities
   (c) review the legislative priorities of others
   (d) testify on major educational legislation.

(3) Develop personal relationships with five or six key legislators.

(4) Develop personal relationship with the governor or key members of the governor's staff.

(5) When possible support their campaigns.

Suggestions for Developing the Board's and SEA Legislative Package:

(1) Ask the SEA staff to review existing statutes for ambiguities, administratively difficult language, vagueness, or language which limits the authority of the Board. Develop housekeeping legislation.

(2) Appoint an ad hoc committee representing each of the major educational groups and ask them to recommend areas needing legislation or ask the various educational groups to submit individual recommendations on areas needing legislation. Develop a legislative package incorporating the best from the various constituents.

(3) Hold a series of public hearings on "The Condition of Education." From those hearings identify
   (a) areas needing curriculum attention
   (b) areas needing governance attention
   (c) areas needing State Board and SEA policy attention
   (d) areas needing legislative attention.

(4) Convene a series of one day meetings between the State Board, the governor, the Chief, and key legislators focusing on
   (a) what is the state of education
   (b) what needs to be done
   (c) how can we meet these needs together.

   The final step would be to identify areas needing a legislative remedy, areas needing increased funding, areas needing State Board and Chief attention, and a plan on how all of this would be accomplished.

Suggestions for Developing Support for the Board's and SEA's Legislative Package.

Several of the preceding suggestions carry within them some support strength for legislative passage. Anytime the Board's legislative package has been developed after considerable constituency input or after legislator and/or the governor involvement, the potential for legislative enactment has been increased. Passing educational legislation of controversy, of magnitude or of considerable cost, requires either broad constituency support, coalition support, key legislator support, the governor's support, or a combination of the preceding.

For the purposes of our discussion here, we will confine our attention to major legislation. (On housekeeping legislation, the SEA legislative liaison normally should touch base with the key educational lobbyists and with any other person or group of significance likely to be impacted so that no unexpected opposition will occur.) Major educational legislation must have the broad support of various key groups. If the legislation will be opposed by any of the major educational groups, much time and attention must be devoted to developing legislative, governor and citizen constituency support.

As much as possible the State Board and SEA should seek broad in-put into any of its major legislative efforts. This will require educational coalition meetings, constituency hearings, key legislator and governor briefing and input sessions, and finally meetings with the media in an effort to develop editorial support. If the legislation is particularly controversial, the State Board should seek out other non-educational, but powerful lobby forces, i.e., public utility, timber, oil, agricultural, united labor, banking, manufacturers, highways and other similar forces, to see if alliances or coalitions could be forged. Some might be repelled by such alliances, but the reality today is that education must compete in the political arena; the political arena is filled with powerful competing forces which can bring to a standstill most legislation which the various forces oppose. Thus unless alliances have been forged, enacting controversial legislation will be difficult.

Finally, a State Board must realize that compromise is a daily event in the legislative process and they must be prepared to respond to offered compromises and tradeoffs. It should be clear that a State Board except for isolated individuals, will not be able to spend time daily being involved in the legislative process. We started our staff recommendations with a plea for joint Board, Chief, and SEA activism. We will also end with that.

The Board, the Chief, and the Chief's legislative liaison must jointly develop a strategy which actively uses the input of each team player at appropriate points. In our view the legislative liaison will play the daily point role, actively working with the legislature. The State Board and the Chief will give major testimony, will make calls on key legislators and the governor, will determine overall strategy, and will make the final decision on compromise and tradeoffs. Daily strategy will be determined jointly by the Chief and his liaison but when a major strategy change is called for, will be made by the Board and the Chief.

If State Boards plan to be influential in carrying out their policy roles, they must be active in the legislative arena. By active, we obviously do not mean reactive. We urge State Boards to introduce legislation, to encourage legislators and the governor to introduce needed legislation, and to build coalitions of support. In carrying out this facet of their responsibility it is imperative that the Board, the Chief and SEA staff work together. Finally our prediction for Boards which choose not to participate actively in the legislative arena is bleak, they will increasingly be by-passed and ignored and will be reduced to useless bodies dealing with meaningless trivia.

SECTION IV — APPENDIX

Footnotes

[1] Roald F. Campbell and Tim L. Mazzoni (eds.), *State Policy Making for the Public Schools: A Comparative Analysis* (Columbus: Ohio State University, Educational Governance Project, 1974)

[2] Stephen K. Bailey *et al., Schoolmen and Politics (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962); Nicholas Masters et al., State Politics in the Public Schools* (New York: Knopf, 1964); Lawrence Iannaccone, *Politics in Education* (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1967); and Harmon Ziegler and Michael Baer, *Lobbying* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1969).

[3] Russell W. Meyers, "Educational Governance," *The Imperative of Leadership*, Paper No. 1 (Denver: National Association of State boards of Education, 1975).

[4] Joel S. Berke, Michael Kirst, and Michael Usdan, *The New State Politics of Education* (Cambridge: Ballinger Press, 1975); Michael Usdan *et al., Education and State Politics* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969).

[5] Gerald Sroufe, "Recruitment Processes and the Composition of State Boards of Education," paper presented at the American Educational Research Assoc., 1969.

[6] Joel S. Berke, "Recent Adventures of State School Finance," *School Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2, February, 1974, pp. 183-206.

[7] Frederick Wirt and Michael Kirst, *The Political Web of American Schools* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972).

[8] Much of this section is adapted from Lawrence O. Pierce, *et al., The Freshman Legislator* (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1973).

*Annotated Bibliography**

Bailey, Stephen K. *et al. Schoolmen and Politics.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972.

Case studies of six Northeastern states that are useful now for historical reference. The sections on New York and New Jersey are particularly interesting in view of recent changes in their policy-making patterns.

Berke, Joel S., Michael Kirst, and Michael Usdan. *The New State Politics of Education.* Cambridge: Ballinger Press, 1975.

This is a basic text on state government, covering the main institution and the actors.

Berke, Joel S. "Recent Adventures of State School Finance," *School Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2, February, 1974.

Comparing the politics of school finance reform in eight states, this article summarizes recent state court decisions in the finance area and the main element of the new laws.

Campbell, Roald F., and Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr. (eds.). *State Policy Making for the Public Schools: A Comparative Analysis.* Columbus: Ohio State University, 1974.

Probably the most comprehensive study available of the structural arrangements of State Boards of Education.

There is a companion volume which deals with the ten states which were analyzed in depth. In addition to the superior analysis of structure and the effects of structure on State Board functioning, the study contains recommendations for consideration. This is undoubtedly the most helpful source currently available in understanding the role of State Boards of Education, State Departments of Education and the Chief State School Officer. It will be published by McCutchan Publishing Corporation, Berkeley, California later this year.

Iannoccone, Lawrence. *Politics in Education.* New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1967.

The first comprehensive analysis of the interaction of politics and education. The social science jargon is a little heavy, but the typology of state interest groups is still widely used.

Pierce, Lawrence O., *et al. The Freshman Legislator.* Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1973.

An orientation handbook for new legislators in Oregon. Most of the concepts can be applied outside Oregon by Laymen and legislators alike.

Sroufe, Gerald. "Recruitment Processes and the Composition of State Boards of Education" (paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, 1969).

The only study of why Board members decided to run for the Board or were nominated. The study is somewhat outdated, but more recent information does not contradict it.

Usdan, Michael *et al. Education and State Politics.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1969.

The only comparative study of the government structure and political interactions between elementary/secondary and higher education. The authors accurately predicted increased competition and conflict between the levels as enrollment declines.

Wirt, Frederick and Michael Kirst. *The Political Web of American Schools.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972.

A basic text on all aspects of politics of education, it covers federal, state and local levels with special chapters on curriculum policy and school desegregation. A revised version will be published by McCutchan Publishing Corporation in 1975.

Ziegler, Harmon and Michael Baer. *Lobbying* Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1969.

Case studies of state lobbying patterns in Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon and Utah. The book covers all aspects of lobby operations and their impact in several areas of public policy including education.

* The Annotated Bibliography was prepared by Dr. Michael W. Kirst, author of Section II — *Strengthening and Improving Relationships Between State Boards of Education and Legislators*

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